

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

Redlands United Church of Christ *An Open and Affirming Church*

June 2005

Staff meeting—Monday, June 6, 10:30 a.m.

“Lectio Prayer Group” meets Monday, June 6, 13, 20, and 27, 7:00 p.m., in the sanctuary.

Knitting Ministry Group will meet Thursday, June 9 and 23, 10:30 – noon, in the church office.

“Sandwich Group” meets Tuesday, June 21, 12:00 noon
in the church office.

Wider Ministries meeting following worship service, Sunday, June 26th

Church Board will meet Tuesday, June 28, 7:00 p.m.

Middle school youth group and High school youth group will meet at various times in June.
Please check the Sunday bulletins for times and places.

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*"...the truly contemplative life [is lived by]
 people living extremely busy lives
 and yet prayer is the undercurrent of whatever they are doing...
 [it is] entirely unselfconscious...
 life full of dance and celebration...
 not at all pious or solemn,
 a life lived close to God just as it [is] close to neighborhood and the natural world."
 —From The Celtic Way of Prayer, by Esther De Waal*

One of the many clarifying moments while I was on pilgrimage in Ireland was this new idea about the contemplative life. I had previously thought that "contemplative" meant a lot of silence and retreating from the normal routine, with large doses of formal prayers, and precious little connection to the natural world. Little did I know!

Ms. De Waal's description of the contemplative life is set within her book which rehearses several hundred years of literature from the Celtic Christian communities of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Cornwall and Brittany. As I read through some of the Celtic literature in this and other texts during my study leave, I began to see more of a continuation of the so-called ancient ways with Christianity. Rather than being a distinct diversion from the known spiritual path, Celtic Christianity blended with what was in the land already to form a peaceful alliance and a continuing stream of spirituality. All in all, a much better way than invasions and crusades, don't you agree?!

So what of this spirituality of the ancient and Christian Celts? From what we know, it was apparently a spirituality that befriended the natural world, that celebrated the changing of the seasons, and that acknowledged the cyclical celebrations of full moons, new moons, solstices, equinoxes, and the like. It makes sense, then, that such a spirituality with its feet firmly on the ground would see prayer as the vernacular. Celtic Christians had prayers for doing the laundry, for washing dishes, for making the bed, for milking the cow, for tending the animals, for the rising sun and the setting sun, for the full and new moons, for illnesses and for cures...in other words, everything, every little (and big) thing in their day was infused with the presence of the holy through prayer. Prayer was not an activity relegated to one day a week or to established times each day. Prayer was the language of the day and of the night, the language that enabled them to complete their tasks; prayer was the language through which they were attentive to the presence of the Divine with them in each and every moment; prayer connected them to one another and to the world in which they lived.

Such was (and is and can be) the contemplative life. It is and can be a life that moves with us as we live and serve and love. Sure, it is great to get away for a week or more of silence at a breathtakingly beautiful retreat center. But such is not necessary in order to live a contemplative life. One only needs to take a breath...a very deep breath...and breathe in the Divine...then exhale...deeply...thoughtfully...prayerfully...and open your eyes to the shimmering trees and the brilliant flowers and the clouds in motion and yes, even, the dirty dishes in the sink...in the truly contemplative life, there is no place where God is not present.

Blessings,

Scriptures and Themes for June 2005

June 5 – A Service of Scripture and Choral Music by John Rutter

Psalm 100; Isaiah 40:9-11, 28-31; 1 Corinthians 14:13-20; Matthew 22:34-40; James 2:14-20, 26; Revelation 21:1-5, 22:17, 21

Once again, our amazing choir will lead us in worship with inspiring music, interspersed with messages from scripture. A good Sunday not to miss!

June 12 – Communion Sunday “Moving On”

Genesis 18:1-15; Matthew 9:35-10:23

We honor all graduates, and especially celebrate those who are graduating this year. If you’ve ever graduated from anything—kindergarten, school of hard knocks, high school, college, grad school, etc—you are welcome to the party today as we enjoy moving on together!

June 19 – The Rev. John Walsh, preaching

Genesis 21:8-21; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

Our friend, colleague, and now member of this congregation, John Walsh will offer another view of the good news. Come, listen, learn.

June 26 – “Heeled Soles”

Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Matthew 10:40-42

Abraham must have been shocked to hear that sacrificing his son was a pre-req for walking with God. The psalmist frets that, on his journey, the enemy will be victorious. And Jesus speaks about that all-important cup of water needed to complete the walk. Having just returned from the Mayor’s Midnight Marathon in Anchorage, Alaska, Rev. Graff will have a word or two to say about walking with God.



Summer Series 2005
Sundays, July 10-August 14
5:00-8:00 pm
Locations TBA

“Jesus, A Revolutionary Biography”

Using the book (same title) by John Dominic Crosson,
we will discuss and reflect upon the life and ministry of Jesus,
and especially note ways that his revolutionary spirit is (or could be!) embodied in us.

As in the past two years, the schedule will include swimming and visiting (5-6 pm),
a potluck meal (6-7 pm),
and study and discussion of the topic (7-8 pm).

Facilitators:
Rev. John Walsh
Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Notes from the President...

Last month I wrote of the wonderful work being done by the area leaders, committees, and elected leadership of the church. This month I have another concrete example to offer. Some of you will remember the request I made for committees to establish Goals and Objectives for the year. I am delighted to tell you that they have done that. The Board took those, reviewed them, and then formulated a set for itself. Those goals and objectives are published later in the Wanderings. They are intended to provide reminders to the Board and motivation for activities that a large number of members feel are important to the life and work of this church.

The other important accomplishment of the past month was the completion by the steering committee of the proposal for a pilot project on parolee transition. That proposal was approved unanimously by the Board. You will hear a lot more about it in the coming weeks as Shepherd groups meet. Furthermore, if you are interested, you can get a copy of the proposal from Renee in the church office, and/or ask Richard Blakley, Dianne Landeros, Bettye Wheeler, LaShawn Lee, Jay Grayson, Sharon or me about it. It is an exciting and challenging program, one that provides a model for how other pilot project proposals should be done.

On Pentecost Sharon spoke of how the Spirit is often poured out on lots and lots of folks, in unexpected times, places, and conditions. I, for one, have seen evidence of that in the past two months in the RUCC.

How often have you heard the phrase, "God moves in mysterious ways..." Well, a few of you know of mysterious workings in the Hester's life. After 38 years of living in Redlands, we are going to move some time this summer to Little Rock, Arkansas. When people hear us relate that, their inevitable reaction is, "Why, of all places, Little Rock?" Frankly, ever since I retired D and I have been looking for some place outside southern California to re-establish. You know the reasons for that – crowded freeways, decline in the quality of life, rising prices, and a feeling that for all its beautiful weather, there are things on the horizon that don't bode well for the state. We didn't expect to discover Arkansas, but when our younger son and family moved there, we visited and instantly felt good about the place. Now, I may well become the most liberal resident of the state, and I know full well that we will never find another congregation like RUCC, but we are going to risk losing contact with old friends and a beloved church to try on another adventure. Maybe the Spirit has something waiting for us in hot, humid, buggy Little Rock!

I plan to continue to serve the church as president until July 1, when Bill Buchanan will step up from his current role as Vice President. D and I will work with the new leadership to try to accomplish an effective transition that focuses on supporting and elaborating on what has been accomplished to date. I have absolutely no doubt that the new leadership will not only oversee completion of what has been begun but, with your help, create new and even more creative opportunities for ministry for this beloved community of God.

Jim Hester

Goals and Objectives for the Board of RUCC for 2005

Compiled by Jim Hester

Primary Goal: to share the joy of this fellowship with the larger community of Redlands through progressive ministry and nurture all people on their journeys of faith.

General and Specific Objectives:

A. Our Public Face

- Build and maintain a kiosk for posting news and information about upcoming events.
- Build new and make use of existing coalitions with public, ecclesiastical, charitable, and humanitarian organizations in the Inland Empire in order to expand our worship, educational, and artistic experiences, and extend our resources for aid.
- Develop a variety of print communications – flyers, posters, business cards, etc. – for distribution to members and others.
- Encourage members to be even more intentional in welcoming new members and guests.
- Identify and train persons – an “Ambassador” program – who will take responsibility for visitors, including follow-up calls, etc.
- Identify organizations in Redlands that need volunteer help and educate members about ways to become involved.
- Improve our website by updating and expanding it, and promote its use among members of the church, with encouragement that they lead others to it.
- Plan and implement a “Speaker’s Forum” that would bring in individuals of note to address pressing theological, political, social, environmental, and ethical/moral issues.
- Survey and price the use of a variety of advertising media, print and electronic.
- Use email more often for communication with members and friends.

B. Our Family

- Address needs for preventive maintenance as identified by the Stewards and establish a budget item for capital reserves in addition to the current contingency maintenance fund.
- Expand the variety of worship experiences and explore other worship traditions for potential use as resources for worship.
- Plan educational and spiritual programs that include study combining adults and older youth.
- Plan recreational programs that focus on a variety of age groups and/or are intentionally intergenerational.
- Re-vision the education areas and produce plans for re-modeling them.
- Undertake exploration and implementation of group and individualized programs for promoting enhancement of spiritual life.

FAITHACTS PROJECTS

FaithActs is busy this year on several old and some new projects. As you know, FaithActs is a steering committee developing projects about which we are passionate or about which YOU are passionate – passionate enough to commit your time and effort to. It is our hope that you will all participate in at least one project and put your faith into action – for the community, environment, or peace and justice.

Fair Trade Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate – We continue to sell these items at church and many of you are purchasing your fair trade items from us regularly. In so doing, you are supporting products grown in an environmentally friendly manner which do not use child labor and which pay directly to the farmers, thereby giving them a decent living wage. Please help us expand this effort by taking it to your work site (do you have a coffee club at work?) or to your clubs and organizations. See or call Chris Nicoloff if you have special needs or requests.

Kiosk – we are trying to build a movable kiosk to be used for posting announcements, sharing church news, and providing updates on FaithActs activities. If you are interested in helping with this project, please see or call Fred Nicoloff.

Parolee Transition – We have a parolee transition steering committee consisting of Dianne Landeros, Richard Blakley, Bettye Wheeler, Lashawn Lee and Jay Grayson; who have been working with the police department to develop this program. You will be receiving more in-depth information on this over the next few weeks as we seek to enlist you to help with hygiene kits, helping parolees establish identification, refurbishing bicycles, arranging a bus trip for children to visit their moms next May, and more.

Letter writing – Speak out on matters of social or economic justice, community concerns, environmental issues and more! Fred Nicoloff is organizing a group for letter writing campaigns to elected officials, letters to news publications, and emails. If you are willing to help with this, see or call Fred Nicoloff.

Arctic drilling – It's not too late! Are you concerned about the plans to drill in the arctic? See or call Bob Barton to find out what you can do.

Help the homeless – I am a member of the Redlands Charitable Resource Coalition representing RUCC, FaithActs. This group is trying to find ways to assist homeless families in Redlands. See me, Dianne Landeros, if you are interested in helping.

Bring your ugly mug to church! – If you don't already have one, remember to bring a mug that you can leave at the church for fellowship and help us to eliminate unnecessary waste. Use your mug – then wash it and put it away. Can you help us build a cabinet for mugs? Call or contact Fred Nicoloff, Larry Rose, or me.

You can find phone numbers and emails of members in the church directory. Get involved! Help us make this world a better place. - Dianne Landeros, FaithActs

Dear Friends,

THANK YOU from Jeanne

What a wonderful celebration to end my year of internship at RUCC ... a Pentecost-filled gathering of spirit, wisdom, food, and gifts! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! As I journey toward the next places where the Spirit is calling I will take you all with me in thoughts and prayers. I ask that you keep me in your prayers as well. Until we meet again, I offer you this blessing that was written by Miriam Therese Winter (another of my favorite song writers):

May the blessing of God go before you,
and may grace and peace abound,
healing Spirit live within you,
tender love wrap you 'round,
May this blessing remain with you always,
May you walk on holy ground.

Jeanne

JUNE WORSHIP LEADERS

5 Barbie Fiske-Phillips
 12 Floyd Orr
 19 Sondra Hodson
 26 Lauren Barton

THANK YOU!

A heartfelt thank you from the mother and father of the Bride.

On the first Sunday in May, three wonderful friends gave our daughter Debbie a lovely bridal shower. Thank you to Valerie Naftzger, Kathie Blakley, Margaret Barnett and Debbie's life long friend Wendy.

The salad luncheon and dessert was delicious. But have we ever been to a meal served at our church that was anything but tasty? From where I was sitting, I was able to look out at the beautiful matriarchal ladies that *once again* gave of themselves. They shared their recipes and showered Debbie with generous and thoughtful gifts. I can remember her Dedication and reception on Mother's Day, 29 years ago, and sixteen years later in May of 1990 she was baptized during Confirmation and these same ladies were there to serve and support. In recognizing this graciousness, we wanted to thank them for the many years they have shared their talents and tender touch to teach, support and share their wisdom and love with our young women who they helped raise in our church family. We are so very blessed for these strong, steadfast women. You have taught us all so much – thank you!

We love and respect you ALL,

Janie and Kenny Hurley

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1 Melanie Moran
 2 Carol Buchanan
 6 Valerie Naftzger
 7 Barbie Fiske-Phillips
 Julie Phillip
 8 Ruth Moses
 9 Robert Woods
 12 Beverly Young
 13 Bonnie Killpatrick
 14 Opal Inman
 Ivonne Moran
 17 Peter Morics
 18 Gene Kuehl
 19 Steve Morics
 21 Bob Barton
 Barbara Hauser
 24 Joan Kay Armantage
 26 Joyce Planeta
 28 Wilma Feltenberger
 30 Allen Killpatrick

In Loving Memory of
 Sylvia Caroline Horstmann
 March 6, 1909 - May 13, 2005

Never too Late to Say 'Welcome!'

Our congregation recently (well, ok, back in early April!) welcomed several new members. They are: Jim and Angelina Ford (sons Jonathon and Michael), Barry and Beth Kolpien (son Matthew and daughter Emily), Barb Lord and Heidi Malone (daughter Emma Malonelord), Lori Pool, Sara Schoonmaker (daughter Avery), John and Karen Walsh (son Matthew and daughter Caitlin), and Janet Wilson. Please note the changes and additions in your RUCC Directory.

Also, please remember that we schedule orientation and reception of new members as needed throughout the year. If you are considering membership, please contact Rev. Graff.

Let this also be a reminder to all members and friends to pick up your very own copy of the RUCC Directory—there are plenty of copies in the Gathering Area.

WELCOME!

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Our Pastor and Teacher, Sharon R. Graff, is available for appointments, pastoral counseling, meetings, and general conversation on most Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Evening and weekend appointments are also possible. Generally she is home on Wednesdays preparing the weekly sermon and completing other worship planning. On most weeks, she tries to take some part of Fridays and Saturdays as time off. Please know that she eagerly awaits serving you!

CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF SERVICE LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

LLUMC invites you to consider becoming a volunteer to assist with ongoing programs. For additional information, please call LLUMC Volunteer Services at (909) 558-4654, (Somebody Needs You program) or LLUCH Volunteer Services at (909) 558-8022 (Help Us Help Our Kids program).

Covenant Choir to Lead Worship on June 5

The Covenant Choir will present a special spring service during morning worship on June 5. Our program will feature the works of British composer John Rutter and will involve our instrumentalists as well.

John Rutter has made an enormous contribution to church music. Born in 1945 in London, his long career, beginning in the sixties, has been one of distinguished musician, but more importantly that of a minister. His compositions include small and large-scale choral and orchestral works, opera, pop and light music, music for BBC television, and a large body of church choral anthems, accessible to performer, listener, and worshiper.

Please join the RUCC Scrapbooking Group on Monday, June 6th from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. at the home of Dianne Landeros, 1368 Prospect Dr., Redlands. Everyone is welcome! RSVP to Dianne at 792-4839.

TWO NEW GROUPS FORMED

In the “after-Easter respite” and in response to needs expressed in your covenants this year, two new groups have been formed with the initial facilitation of Rev. Graff.

A “Sandwich Group”—for those who find themselves “sandwiched” between the generations in their family (caring for aging parents, grown children, and/or grandchildren)—will meet for supportive conversation on a monthly basis. The next gathering will be on Tuesday, June 21st from noon-1:30 p.m. in Sharon’s office at church. Bring a sandwich and your open spirit.

A “Lectio Prayer Group”— the experiential reading of scripture — is open to all ages. Young adults are particularly urged to include this new small group as a way of moving deeper spiritually with your sisters and brothers here at RUCC. We meet Monday evenings, 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Any questions about either of these new small groups may be directed to Rev. Graff in the church office, 793-3520, or by email at pastor@uccredlands.org.

During the summer, we will be combining the July and August issues of Wanderings. If you have items you would like included in this single issue, please submit them to Renee in the office no later than Friday, June 17, 2005.

SPECIAL MUSIC FOR SPRING AND SUMMER WORSHIP

All Aboard! And now we’ve reached a temporary resting! On May 15, our two handbell choirs under the direction of Kristen Cameron celebrated Pentecost and closed their regular season with a rich program of ringing sounds. (And a few other sounds, including a train whistle in a lively version of *God’s Train*.)

The Covenant Choir, in turn, will offer music by John Rutter for its closing service of the spring. On June 5, assisted by several instrumentalists, our singers will present several of this English composer’s melodic, memorable and reverent anthems. Please join us for this worship.

The next Sunday, June 12 will begin the summer respite for the choir, continuing through September 4. So we are seeking willing individual and small group talent for special music. Many of you have graciously participated in the past—we welcome you to do so again. Some of you we don’t know about yet! If you have either vocal or instrumental talents to share in summer worship, please see or call Peggy McMeans at 798-1474.

The Hawley-Zechlin Family is returning to Redlands for a visit! Jennifer, Dana, and Kire (remember the Angel Gabriel from two Christmas pageants ago?) will be here on Sunday, June 12 to worship with us again. That afternoon at 2:00 pm, all are invited to First Baptist Church in Redlands, to witness Kire's baptism. Some will recall that the family moved to Tennessee nearly a year ago and have remained members, though from a distance. We look forward to welcoming them back and to celebrating this important day in Kire's spiritual journey.

US AND IUCC ADULT EDUCATION EVENT

Friday, June 10, 2005 8:00PM

GUEST SPEAKER Jim Wallis - Christian leader for social change

He is a speaker, author, activist, and international commentator on ethics and public life. Wallis was a founder of Sojourners - Christians for justice and peace - more than 30 years ago and continues to serve as the editor of Sojourners magazine, covering faith, politics and culture. In 1995, Wallis was instrumental in forming Call to Renewal, a national federation of churches, denominations, and faith-based organizations from across the theological and political spectrum working to overcome poverty. Wallis speaks at more than 200 events a year and his columns appear in the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and other major newspapers. His most recent book is God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It (Harper Collins, 2005). He offers regular commentary and analysis for radio and television and teaches a course at Harvard University on "Faith, Politics, and Society." In the last several years, Wallis has led more than 250 town meetings, bringing together pastors, civic and business leaders, and elected officials in the cause of social justice and moral politics. Under Wallis' leadership, Call to Renewal has hosted annual Roundtables on Poverty for national religious leaders and successful National Summits. Endorsed initially by a broad cross-section of Christian leaders, Call To Renewal's Covenant and Campaign to Overcome Poverty now has tens of thousands of supporters around the United States.

Jim Wallis was raised in a Midwest evangelical family. As a teenager, his questioning of the racial segregation in his church and community led him to the black churches and neighborhoods of inner-city Detroit. He spent his student years involved in the civil rights and antiwar movements. While at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, Jim and several other students started a small magazine and community with a Christian commitment to social justice which has now grown into Sojourners whose combined print and electronic media have a readership of more than 100,000 people. In 1979, Time magazine named Wallis one of the "50 Faces for America's Future." His books include Faith Works (2000), The Soul of Politics: A Practical and Prophetic Vision for Change (1994), Who Speaks for God? A New Politics of Compassion, Community, and Civility (1996), Call to Conversion (1981).

Join us at the University Synagogue - 3400 Michelson - Irvine
More information can be obtained by contacting Michael Spindle at:

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4915 Alton Parkway
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949.733.2958 Fax
iucc@iucc.org Email

Carpools will leave the RUCC parking lot at 5:00 p.m. for those wishing to attend this event.

June Scripture Readings

June 5: *Psalm 100; Isaiah 40:9-11, 28-31; 1 Corinthians 14:13-20; Matthew 22:34-40; James 2:14-20,26; Revelation 21:1-5, 22:17, 21*

June 12: Communion Sunday – *Genesis 18:1-15; Matthew 9:35-10:23*

June 19: *Genesis 21:8-21; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39*

June 26: *Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Matthew 10:40 -42*

Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff
 Choir Director – Peggy McMeans
 Organist & Handbell Director – Kristen Cameron
 Youth Director – Craig Colclough
 Sunday Child Care – Mariana and Mina Ryan
 Administrative Assistant – Renee Chavez
 Custodian – Jay Grayson
 Church office hours: 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday – Friday
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